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Sheriff's Office investigates series of scams

By Paul Garrod
Staff Writer
news4garrod@gmail.com

Van Buren County Sheriff Daniel Abbott reported that a series of scams are still being at-tempted and occurring in Van Buren County. On Friday, Jan. 10, a victim was contacted at approximately 1:48 p.m. by an individual alleging to be a lawyer, advising that a family member was currently lodged in jail and needed $15,000 to bond the subject out of jail. Sheriff Abbott said, "The suspects in these cases usually use the most heinous crimes to incite fear and shock in the unsuspecting victim. In this incident it was a traffic crash in which a child was killed. These claims were all false,"

He continued, "In this particular case, a LYFT courier was sent to the victim's address to collect the funds. The suspect advised the victim to wrap the money in newspaper and place it in a cardboard box. The money was then turned over to an unknown subject who took it to allegedly bond out the family member."

A short time later, the suspect recontacted the victim and tried to extort more funds from them, accoirding to Sheriff Abbott.

Sheriff Abbott said, "The Sheriff's Office will never request bond payment ever be paid in this manner. If anyone calls requesting bond payment to stay vigilant and contact the Sheriff's Office to check for validity. We will never send a courier service to collect the funds or request any sort of payment in the form of a gift card. If anyone attempts to collect bond from you stay vigilant and make sure the claims are legit before handing over any money."

Sheriff Abbott encouraged the public to reach out to the Van Buren County Sheriff's Office if they have additional questions. "This case remains open, and the Road Patrol Division is working alongside our Criminal Investigation Division to locate the suspect(s) involved."

Sheriff's Office investigates contractor fraud

An area builder is facing criminal charges following an investigation by the Van Buren County Sheriff's Office. Van Buren County Sheriff Daniel Abbott said Gordon Leighton, 58, of the Lawton area, faces one count of contractor – fraud, a felony, and a second count of unlicensed residential builder, a misdemeanor.

Sheriff Abbott said that Leighton has been operating without a license and has been inves-tigated for contractor fraud in Van Buren County. The Road Patrol Division has been working alongside the Criminal Investigation Division and has gotten charges authorized on the local builder.

Sheriff Abbott said this incident was originally reported on August 14, 2024, in the 64000 block of Westwood Drive in Antwerp Township. "The victims came forward with concerns regard-ing who they hired to rebuild their home that had been destroyed in a fire. The victim had received a payout from their insurance company and had paid Leighton to build their family a new home back in November of 2022. The family has been renting an apartment during the alleged rebuild," said Sheriff Abbott.

According to Sheriff Abbott, the family has been renting an apartment for nearly two years awaiting the construction of their new home. Leighton had started the construction, pouring the foundation, in January of

Gordon Leighton

2023. "The last time any work was done was in October of 2023. The home has stood as just a stick frame house with no siding or interior work being completed. The family is out over $95,000 of the remaining construction which they have already paid for," said Sheriff Abbott.

During the investigation it was found that Leighton was operating without a license and had been moving funds around from other jobs to cover the costs of other constructions. "This does not appear to be an isolated incident and the Van Buren County Sheriff's Office expects more victims to come forward," said Sheriff Abbott.

Senate Republican Leader Nesbitt launches campaign for governor

Republican Leader Aric Nesbitt

On Tuesday, Jan. 14, Republican Leader Aric Nesbitt of Porter Township announced he is running to become Michigan's 50th governor, becoming the first announced Republican candidate in the 2026 gubernatorial election.

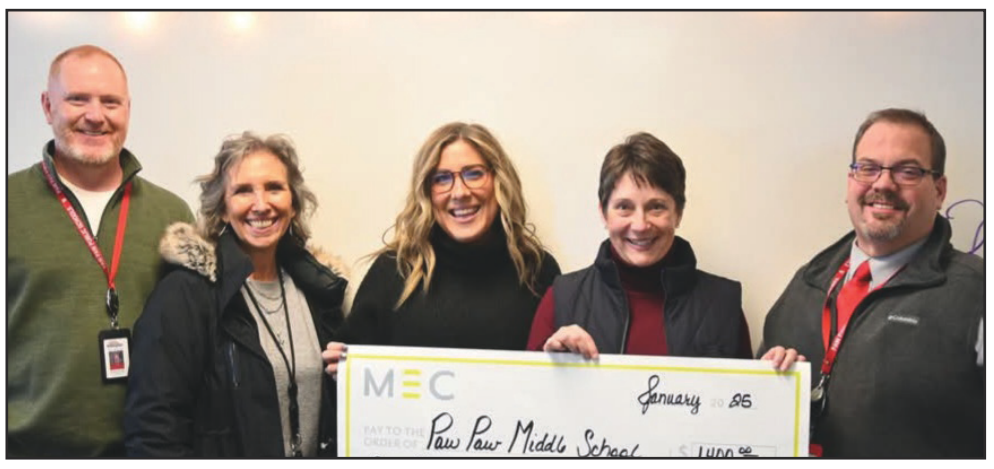
Nesbitt grew up on a sixth-generation family farm and earned "Alumni of the Year" from Hillsdale College for his work as a conservative reformer. He currently fights for Michiganders as Senate Republican Leader, both challenging the Democrats' failing policies and offering solutions to revitalize Michigan. Aric and his wife Trisha have two young children, and with another on the way, so they have a personal interest in creating a better future for Michigan families.

"The people of Michigan have been left behind under Democrat rule as they've raised taxes, wasted a $9 billion surplus, chose politically-motivated corporate handouts over fixing our roads, and tried to impose their left-wing ideology on all of us," said Aric Nesbitt. "As governor, I will put Michigan first by supporting taxpayers over the woke left, empowering parents, keeping families safe, and standing with President Trump to revive our manufacturing industry and Make Michigan Great Again."

After delivering President Trump a resounding victory and returning a Republican Majority to the State House, Michiganders are ready for new leadership - and Nesbitt will unite a dynamic coalition of conservatives, small business owners, farmers, law enforcement and working families to build a freer, more secure, and more prosperous Michigan for the next generation.

Paw Paw Public School receives MEC grants

From left, MEC representatives Lori Ruff, Patty Nowlin, Katy Cole and Trixie, Paw Paw Later Elementary Principal Carolyn Murray, Paw Paw Early Elementary Principal Leah Barnes and Paw Paw Public Schools Superintendent Jeremy Davison.
Photo courtesy/Paw Paw Public Schools



From left, Paw Paw Middle School Principal Jerry McDaniel, Lori Ruff, of MEC, Kaylah Laurian, Patty Nowlin of MEC, and Paw Paw Public Schools Superintendent Jeremy Davison.
Photo courtesy/Paw Paw Public Schools

Officials from Midwest Energy & Communications, (MEC) Cassopolis, visited Paw Paw Later Elementary and Paw Paw Middle School on Thursday, Jan. 9, to present surprise grant award checks to Paw Paw Middle School teacher Kaylah Laurian and Paw Paw Public Schools Animal Assisted Services coordinator, Katy Cole, both recipients of MEC's "Strengthening Schools Grants."

The "Strengthening Schools Grants," coordinated and awarded by Midwest Energy and Communications, are designed to build strong communities by giving local educators the oppor-tunities to reach their students in new and exciting ways. According to the award letter, MEC re-ceived 110 applications totaling over $280,000 in requested funds. Paw Paw Public Schools had two of its educators be among the 30 grants awarded this year.

Laurian is planning to use the $1,400 grant she received to purchase new novels incorpo-rating community themes for the sixth through eighth grade English Language Arts curriculum at Paw Paw Middle School, while Cole will apply her $2,000 grant toward essential supplies and funding needed for the district's Therapy Dog program.

PPPS notified of cybersecurity incident involving third party vendor

Paw Paw Public Schools issued a statement about a recent unauthorized ac-cess of information that occurred involving PowerSchool, the district's third-party student information system.

Paw Paw Public Schools Superintendent Jeremy Davison said, "We were recently informed that an incident took place in which an unauthorized party gained access to certain PowerSchool student information system (SIS) data in school districts nationwide. While we have been assured by PowerSchool that this incident has been resolved, our technology staff and the technology staff at the Van Buren Intermediate School District, who hosts PowerSchool for our district, are carefully checking at the local level to be thorough and diligent for our students and families. Should there be any future development or actions required, those affected will be noti-fied."

Serita's Black Rose duo performs at First Congregational Church

by James Windell

Jon Hayes, guitarist in the Serita's Black Rose Duo, has a saying: "What comes from the heart, reaches the heart."

That he says sums up what he and Serita Crowley, vocalist and harmonica player, do in their performances.

"We kind of work intuitively and get a sense of our audience and what they are responding to," Jon said recently in an interview. "We try to make it an uplifting experience for our audience."

Serita's Black Rose Duo will be performing at the First Congregational Church in South Haven on Sunday, January 19.

The duo from Grand Rapids will bring their unique blend of funk, rock, blues, and soul to the concert. Performing together for more than 20 years, Crowley and Hayes play much of the timeless "feel good music" from the 60's and 70's along with their own original hits.

They met 22 years ago in Grand Rapids when both were looking for musical collaborations. Since becoming both musical partners and life partners, the duo has opened for Smokey Robinson and Kansas. And Serita appeared with James Brown and opened for Patti LaBelle.

Serita Crowley says that she came from a musical family, and she was exposed to gospel music from her mother's side of the family and the blues from her father's side. "The story in our family was that when my daddy was nine, he was supposed to go on the road with blues greats Jimmy Reed and B.B. King," Serita said. "My grandma told him he couldn't do that because he was only nine years old."

But her father, who played the harmonica and guitar and sang, was important in her life. "He was one of my great inspirations," she says. "He had a great voice, like a way down South church kind of voice, and it was beautiful. I tried to mimic his singing."

While Jon Hayes didn't come from a particularly musical family, he did learn the guitar from his older brothers. His brothers were left-handed and even though Jon is right-handed he learned to play with his left hand. "I do everything right-handed – except play the guitar," he says. "There aren't a lot of left-handed guitarists around."

Their self-titled EP release in 2012 won several awards including WYCE's Jammie Award for "Best Short Form Album." They also won several Eclipse Awards for "Best Sound Design."

The concert on Sunday, January 19, 2025, will begin at 3:00 pm at the First Congregational Church UCC, 651 Phoenix Street, South Haven. Tickets, available at the door, are $20. For information, call (269) 637-3804, opt. 5.

The life and poetry of Michigan poet Benjamin Franklin King

by James Windell

Nothing to do but work,
Nothing to eat but food,
Nothing to wear but clothes
To keep one from going nude.

That is the opening stanza of one of Benjamin King's most well-known poems. As suggested in these few lines, King was a gentle satirist and humorist.

Born in St. Joseph, Michigan, in 1857, he billed himself as "Ben King, the Sweet Singer of St. Joe" later in life.

A program entitled "The Life and Rhymes of Poet Ben King" will be presented by the Scott Club on Tuesday, January 21, 2025. Bob Myers, Director of History Programing at the Historical Society of Michigan, will examine the life and the poetry of Benjamin Franklin King, Jr., who became a favorite of the Press Club of Chicago during his lifetime. The Press Club published a posthumous collection of his works, "Ben King's Verse" in 1894, comparing him with Thomas Hood, a then famous English humorist and poet.

King first came to prominence for a concert given during the World's Columbian Exposition. Opie Read, a journalist and humorist, invited King to tour with him. On tour, King read his poetry with piano accompaniment. After his book of poetry was published, it was said that the book outsold any other single volume of verses in Michigan. King died while on tour in 1883 and is buried in the St. Joseph City Cemetery. A monument erected in Lake Bluff Park, Berrien County, Michigan in 1924 features a bronze bust of King created by Chicago sculptor Leonard Crunelle. On the granite monument base are lines from his poem "The River St. Joe":

Where the bumblebee sips
and the clover's in bloom,
and the zephyr's come laden with peachblow perfume.
Where the thistle-down pauses in search of the rose
and the myrtle and woodbine and wild ivy grows;
Oh, give me the spot that I once used to know by the side of the placid old River St. Joe!

The Scott Club is located at 652 Phoenix Street, South Haven, and all programs begin at 1:00 pm. The program on Ben King is a This is a Zoom only program. For a Zoom link for a program or more information about Scott Club, email info@scottclub.org

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2ND FRONT PAGE

Lawton man sentenced to 60 to 100 years for murdering ex-girlfriend

Jeffrey Kucharski was sentenced to a minimum of 60 years in prison for the fatal stabbing of his ex-girlfriend, Taylor Dragicevich.

A Lawton man who pleaded guilty to the brutal stabbing of his ex-girlfriend learned his sentence Tuesday.

Jeffrey Kucharski was charged with open murder back in May 2023 after 28-year-old Taylor Dragicevich, his ex-girlfriend, was found dead in a Kalamazoo parking lot.

Kucharski entered a guilty plea on Dec. 11, 2024. He was sentenced Tuesday to 60 to 100 years in prison with credit for 415 days served.

The case goes back to May 20, 2023, when Dragicevich was found with multiple stab wounds at Emerald Park Apartments in what police called a "vicious" attack.

Police said she was stabbed in the face, head and hands. She died from those sharp force injuries and the coroner ruled her death a homicide.

Kalamazoo detectives later linked a GPS tracker with a matching fingerprint, a large bloody knife and cellphone location data to Kucharski. Probable cause documents obtained by 13 ON YOUR SIDE in 2023 revealed more about what led up to his arrest.

Authorities said he violated a personal protection order she had filed against him before the brutal attack.

In the aftermath of her killing, police used license plate reading technology to trace a GMC Terrain in the area of East Cork Street and Old East Cork around the time of the murder.

Police ran the plate and discovered the vehicle belonged to Kucharski's sister. That led them to an address on 66th Avenue, which the Van Buren County Sheriff's Office surveilled the night of May 20.

The GMC was seen leaving the address and authorities pulled it over. Kucharski's sister was driving, and law enforcement impounded the SUV.

In the early morning hours of May 21, detectives secured a warrant to search the 66th Avenue home.

That's where they found Kucharski in an attic of the garage.

It took several hours to negotiate with Kucharski while he threatened to harm himself. He was ultimately arrested for violation of the personal protection order Dragicevich had against him.

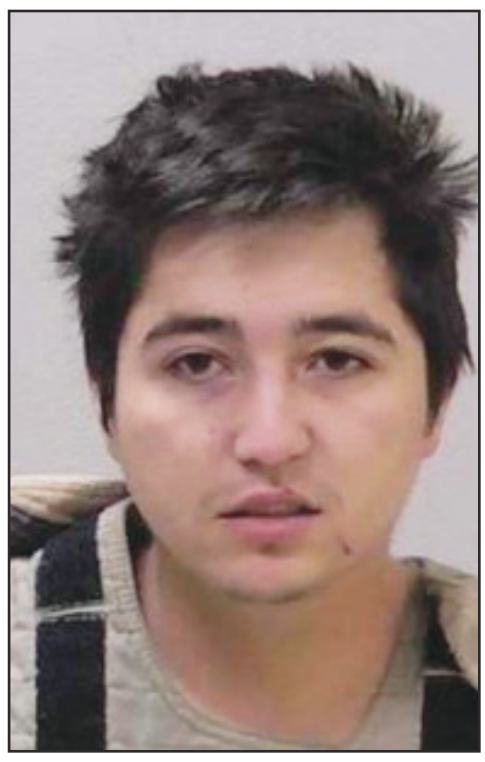
Following his arrest, investigators found a large knife, and lab results confirmed the presence of human blood. Kucharski's shirt and pants also showed the presence of blood.

An investigation of Kucharski's cell phone data showed he was in the area of the murder around the time it was committed, and his fingerprints were found on a GPS tracker under Dragicevich's vehicle, detectives claim in court documents.

In the weeks after her death, those who knew Dragicevich said that the system failed her.

Lisa Ambrosio is the president and owner of Wenke Greenhouses, where Dragicevich worked. She said the greenhouse took precautions for Dragicevich's safety after she filed a restraining order against Kucharski in March of 2023.

Court documents recount an incident in which Dragicevich said Kucharski was holding a razor blade and she feared he would harm her with it. This was just days before she requested the personal protection order.



Jeffrey Kucharski

Taylor Dragicevich

Dispatcher honored with Stork Award

Van Buren County Sheriff Daniel Abbott reported that Dispatcher Brooke Smith was honored this week with a Stork Award. She received a call from a subject in Bangor advising a 29-year-old woman was in labor. "Brooke remained calm and provided critically established medical protocols for assisting in childbirth and determined that the delivery was imminent," said Sheriff Abbott. In approximately 2 ½ minutes from receiving the 911 call she successfully assisted in delivering a healthy baby girl. She continued to provide comfort and assurance until EMS arrived on scene.

Van Buren County Sheriff's Office Uniform Response took a larceny in Geneva Township of a trailer and lawnmower. The lawnmower was a John Deere G100 with a 52-inch deck. The trailer was an assembled dump/tilt trailer with license plate D895011. Anyone with information on this is asked to our office at (269) 657-3101," said Sheriff Abbott.

Uniform Response handled a traffic crash, finding a lost driver incident in Porter Township. Upon arrival, deputies found the car had left the roadway and crashed into a tree, it was cold to the touch, and snow was accumulated on it. During the investigation, a nearby resident called dispatch advising a male subject came to their residence, stating he was having car trouble and was cold. Prior to arrival, the driver left the residence walking. Deputies found his footprints by checking the area leading off the roadway into a field. They followed the footprints through a field, wooded area, and into an edge of a swamp. They located the driver unresponsive and lying on the ground under some brush. They were able to get him to respond and become somewhat coherent. His clothes were wet and starting to freeze as well as him not being able to feel his legs. "Deputies were able to get him out of the swamp and back to the road so emergency treatment could be rendered moving from the scene. No doubt the deputies' action saved his life," said Sheriff Abbott.

Narcotic detectives executed a search warrant on Christmas Eve in Bangor Township. Two individuals were found to have methamphetamine in their possession. Both individuals were arrested this week after the drugs were analyzed and the bench warrants were issued. They were charged with possession of methamphetamine and maintaining a drug house.

"Our Reserve deputies in 2024 worked/volunteered 3,581.25 hours. I cannot express enough how important this division is to not only our office, but to the citizens of Van Buren County. A lot of those hours put in frees up our Uniform Response deputies so they can be on the road in our community as well as our Corrections deputies so they can do their jobs in the jail," said Sheriff Abbott.

Uniform Response for the total year of 2024 had 5,002 traffic stops. They handled 11,120 calls for service. Dispatch took 108,018 telephone calls in 2024. The total number of 911 calls received was 38,580. The total number of calls for service in 2024 was 65,248. In comparison from 2023, that number was 75,674. Those numbers are from Law Enforcement, EMS, Animal Control, Fire Department's, Traffic Stops, Misc.

Uniform Response handled a PPO (Personal Protection Order) Violation. The suspect lives in Alabama that was violating the PPO and the victim lives in Van Buren County. Charges were authorized on the incident.

SPORTS

Gobles wrestlers shine at Decatur

It was another big week for Gobles wrestling.

By John Raffel
Correspondent

GOBLES — Coach Erin Carlin's Gobles team topped seventh-ranked Decatur and won the recent championship at Decatur Team Duels Tournament.

It was Allegan over Gobles (43-26); Gobles over Delton Kellogg (48-30); Gobles over Niles (58-24), Gobles over Coloma (53-22); Gobles over Holton (62-11), Gobles over Decatur (48-33); Gobles over Parchment (84-0).

"Finn Carlin, Mason Mansfield, Devin Doorlag, Aiden Dukes, and Brody Marshall anchored an impressive week that was capped with the Team Championship over No. 7 Decatur," Carlin said. :Each of these

boys went undefeated over the week. Mason Mansfield maintains the team lead in takedowns and Brody Marshall increases his team lead in pins. Mansfield has also captured the team lead in Tech Falls.

"Overall, the Tigers finished the week 6-1 in duels action. Edgar Raseman grew significantly as a varsity wrestler. He went 7-0 on the week but more

importantly, he is pushing his comfort zone and becoming a more versatile wrestler. Finn Carlin toughed through significant injuries and ended the week by not allowing anyone out of the first period against him. Devin Doorlag and Aiden Dukes are very different wrestlers but they give the

Tigers a formidable duo at the 26/32 weight classes.

"Brody Marshall continues to defeat the best kids in the region and Mason Mansfield struggles to find opponents that can keep up with his

pace on the mat. Down four starters, it was the JV wrestlers who played a significant role in the Tigers' success this week. Dominic Redaway and Gabriel Constanza both went undefeated in their first week of

varsity action. Thomas Burrell went a very impressive 1-1. They were the next men up and simply outpaced their opponents all week."

The Tigers are gifted with mentally strong kids, Carlin said. "They compartmentalize injury, pain, and fatigue and know that their number one job is to outpace their opponent. It was a blessing to see these

JV wrestlers step up and do the same."

The Tigers travel to Constantine on Jan 15 to duel Schoolcraft and Constantine. Gobles is 3-1 in conference and 19-3 Overall.

"The Tigers have now handily beat two of the top D4 teams in the state," Carlin said. "They have seven wrestlers ranked in the top 10 of their respective weight classes."

Paw Paw wrestlers beat Three Oaks

By John Raffel
Correspondent

PAW PAW — Paw Paw's wrestling team defeated Three Oaks River Valley 66-9 in the Comstock Invitational recently.

For Paw Paw Daniel Haley (120), Dante Krause (126), Kholby Armco (144), Kameron Armco (175), Gunner Gale (190) and Mason Volenski (106) won by forfeits.

Ty Elmore (132) lost 8-3 to James Kaminski; Tyler Pentland (138) was pinned in 2:53 by Callan Davis; Zachary Klimp (157) pinned Aaron Berk in 1:59; Alex Burgess (157) pinned Jorge Arellano in 38 seconds; Jaydon Smith (165) pinned Kyle Kirk in 1:37; Vincent Chavez (215) pinned Jeff Terdel in 1:38 and Aaron Quiles (285) pinned Sebastian Arellano in 57 seconds.

Paw Paw lost to Hopkins 53-30.

For Paw Paw: Grant Krause (126) was pinned in 1:27 by Luke Klinge; David Pokurny (132) was pinned by Cooper Anderson; London Bilton (138) was pinned by Dylan Cook in 3:55; Justin Lhaman (144) lost 18-1 to Caden Brown, Kholby Armijo (15), Kameron Armijo (165), and Aaron Quilles (285) won by forfeits; Alex Burgess (157) was pinned in 2:58 by Zachary Wierenga in 2:58; Gunner Gale (190) was pinned 58 seconds by Trevor Anderson; Vincent Chavez (215) was pinned in 1:11 by Wyatt Harmsen (215); Mason Volenski (106) was pinned in 1:09 by Charlie Eding and Daniel Hadley (120) pinned Tyler Williams in 54 seconds.

Lawrence girls defeat Decatur

By John Raffel
Correspondent

LAWRENCE — Lawrence girls basketball team beat Decatur 44-38 on Jan. 9.

Carolina Mancera had 14 points; Kaylin Leyva had 12 points and Hailey Camp had 12 points.

Lawerence also lost to Centreville 26-21 on Jan 7.

Lawerence is 5-2 overall and will play on Jan 15 at Cassopolis, on Jan. 16 at Marcellus, at home on Jan. 20 vs. Fennville, and home on Jan. 23 vs. Bloomingdale and on Jan. 28 vs. Comstock.

The Lawrence boys team improved to 1-7 with its first win of the season on Jan. 9 at Decatur.

Lawrence lost to Centreville 60-28 in its first game back from the holiday break.

Lawrence was home with Cassopolis on Jan. 14 and will be at home with Marcellus on Jan. 17.

South Haven cheerleader set for strong season

By John Raffel
Correspondent

SOUTH HAVEN — Jada A. Lewis-Suggs is a key member of South Haven's competitive cheer team this season.

"We have performed really well together and connect really good," Lewis-Suggs said. "I would say I performed well so early in the season. I feel I am improved this year and using my legs and my endurance. My role on the tank is like the mama bear; a lot of the girls can come to me and talk to me about anything.

"My role has been the same since last year because girls feel open enough to talk to me about anything. My fundamental strength is the power I can give and using thy body and endurance while having a good mindset that I can do what I need to do."

Lewis-Suggs said she worked on her legs and my splits just by stretching and doing workouts.

"My memorable moment was this season when we performed around three and we just did amazing," Lewis-Suggs said. "We have tumbling classes and a highlights is everyone seems to be improving on the tumbling skills. I have met my expectations just by doing what I need to do. The team has met expectations."

Lewis-Suggs is also in track.

"My favorite sports is cheerleading because of the bond we make and the work this you have to put in to have a good performance," Lewis-Suggs said. When the season ends, we have a mini-cheer competition that girls can participate in."

Bangor falls to Gobles

By John Raffel
Correspondent

BANGOR — Bangor played Gobles at home Monday night in boys basketball action and lost 53-33.

"We competed well for three quarters,: Bangor coach Robert Culbertson said.

Bangor had the lead 13-7 after the first quarter. The Bangor boys were down six points at halftime and down nine to start the third quarter.

Julian Pullins scored 14 points with four threes and Jonah Luter scored 10 points.

Bangor was set to play Tuesday at home against Bloomingdale[1SEP]Bangor overall is 2-8 and in the conference is 1-5. One of Bangor's wins was a forfeit over Covert. Bangor lost recently to Marcellus 75-49 and to Comstock 72-60.

Julian Pullins scored 17 points with 5 threes against Marcellus, Jonah Luter scored 14 points, and Carson Pullins scored 10 points and 8 assists.

The Bangor girls were scheduled to play on Friday at home with Marcellus but the contest was postponed.

Bangor defeated Comstock 48-24 in its last outing and before that lost to Coloma 37-21 in the Bangor Holiday Shootout.

The Bangor girls will be at Bloomingdale on Jan 14.

South Haven boys drop heartbreakers

By John Raffel
Correspondent

SOUTH HAVEN — South Haven Rams dropped two heartbreakers last week in boys basketball action to fall to 8-2 overall after an 8-0 start.

'"We had a tough week," Rams coach Ryne Hagerty said.

The week started with a 50-49 loss to Benton Harbor.

South Haven led 11-9 after the first quarter and 28-20a t halftime and

45-33 after the third quarter. But Benton Harbor had a 17-4 scoring advantage in the final quarter.

Jkwon Lewis scored 13 points for Benton Harbor while Kesean Hobbs had 12 points, Desean Mathewson scored 10 points.

Xavier Clayton had eight points.

For South Haven, Mason Parks scored 16 points, Grayson Knox had 14 points and Noah Weaver had 12.

South Haven had a 12-7 lead after the first quarter against Bridgman and 22-20 at halftime. Bridgman was up 41-34 after the third quarter and it was 46-46 after regulation. Bridgman outscored South Haven 9-7 in overtime.

Weaver had 14 points for South Haven. Mason Parks had 11 points.

Paw Paw boys win two

By John Raffel
Correspondent

PAW PAW — Paw Paw boys had two wins recently including on Monday, Jan, 6, vs. Sturgis at Paw Paw.

Paw Paw trailed 10-8 after the first quarter but it was tied 28-28 at halftime. Paw Paw led 36-32 after the third quarter.

Kaelin Tatem had 22 points, seven rebounds, and three assists plus three steals for Paw Paw. Aydn Roth had 19 points and two assists,

"The Red Wolves start their first game after break with a win," coach Aaron Beery said.

"We started off slow and allowed Sturgis to do what they wanted to on offense. So the pace of the game was very much dictated by the Trojans.

"Offensively, the Red Wolves were very efficient shooting 53.7 percent from the floor (63 percent from twos and 35.7 percent from threes and had 16 assists on 22 made baskets. Good to get the win but we have a lot to clean up."

On Friday, Paw Paw was at Three Rivers and won 61-33.

Paw Paw had quarter leads of 19-5, 31-18 and 47-28,

Truman Brennan had 23 points 3 rebounds, one assist, and two steals.

Ryan Holmes had 11 points, six rebounds, two assists and four steals.

The Red Wolves continue their winning ways," Beery said. {They now stand at 8-1 on the season and 5-1 in the Wolverine Conference. Our defense took a step forward and was exceptional in the 1st and 4th quarters. The pace was much more up and down leading to a lot of quick shots. We were not as efficient shooting the ball, but we did not need to be with the way we were defending."

Lawton falls at Three Rivers

By John Raffel
Correspondent

LAWTON — Lawton competed in the Three Rivers Super Dual earlier this month.

Lawton lost to Kalamazoo Central 64-15, lost to Coldwater 47-29; bowed to Constantine 65-218; fell to Niles 66-18 and lost to Otsego 66-18.

Lawton, against Kalamazoo Central, got wins from AJ Terry (106), Trenton Bigleow (113) and Austin Garcia (120).

Against Goldwater, winners for Lawton were Noah Malloy (113), Austin Garcia (126), Made Streich (144) Landen Streich (1900 and AJ Terry (106).

Trenton Bigelow, Austin Garcia and Noah Withers were winners against Constantine.

Trenton Bigelow (120), Austin Garcia (126) and AJ Terry (106) won against Niles.

In the match with Otsego, Noah Mallory, AJ Terry and Austin Garcia were winners.

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Carretero named Kiwanis Club Student of Month

The December Paw Paw Kiwanis Club Student of the Month is Gavin Carretero. He was nominated by his teacher, Cari Houston. Houston said of Carretero, "Gavin is my TA (teacher's assistant) and he consistently goes above and beyond every day. Gavin proactively helps other students, often before they even ask. He earns their respect and attention with ease, thanks to his approachable demeanor and strong sense of positivity and a genuine desire to see others succeed. His kindness, integrity, and dedication to excellence truly shine through." Carretero likes to make things and wants to become an aerospace engineer. He will be attending Western Michigan University in the fall. Shown in photo from left are Mary Hartwell, Kiwanis member, nominating teacher, Cari Houston, student, Gavin Carretero, mother, Kristen Reed, and grandmother, Marsha Hoke

Photo courtesy Paw Paw Kiwanis Club

December sales take dip for South Haven area

By Ryan Servatius

Average Sales Price:
Dec. 2024: $347,886 (Decrease of 12%)
Dec. 2023: $396,768
Average Sales Price Year to Date:
Dec., 2024: $428,121 (Increase of 6%)
Dec., 2023: $404,940
Median Sales Price:
Dec., 2024: $337,500 (Increase of 21%)
Dec., 2023: $279,900
Median Sales Price YTD (Year to Date):
2024: $334,000 (Increase of 4%)
2023: $320,000
Units Sold:
Dec., 2024: 22 units (Decrease of 12%)
Dec., 2023: 25 units
Units Sold YTD (Year to Date):
2024: 373 units (Decrease of 5%)
2023: 391 units
DOM (Days on Market):
Dec., 2024: 54 days (Increase of 35% in time on the market)
Dec., 2023: 40 days
Days on the Market YTD (Year to Date):
2024: 45 (Increase of 15% longer on market)
2023: 39
Dollar Volume:
Dec., 2024: $7,653,500 (Decrease of 23%)
Dec., 2023: $9,919,200
Dollar Volume YTD (Year to Date):
2024: $159,689,161 (Increase of 1% year over year)
2023: $158,331, 650

The number of residential listings on the market in December were 101 units, the lowest since March, 2024 when there were 97 listings on the market.

REO/Bank Owned is at 2% for December, 2024, which is on par with November num-bers. The number averaged around 4 units per month for 2024 for Southwest Michigan.

The year 2024 ended pretty much the same as 2023 in dollar volume and a very slight in-crease in median sales price year over year. The lower number of units sold most likely was based on available inventory that entered the marketplace.

2025 is poised to be a year of the market opening up with more inventory with interest rates on the downward trend and coming out of an election year buyers and sellers look towards a normal year without Washington, D.C. making any drastic changes that would affect housing in a negative way.

Ryan Servatius is a Real Estate Broker in South Haven and the statistics come from Southwestern Michigan MLS transactions.

State Police motor carrier officers join forces to fight human trafficking

January is National Human Trafficking Awareness Month, and the Michigan State Police (MSP) Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Division is teaming up with their counterparts from across the nation to raise awareness of human trafficking.

From Jan. 13 - 17, MSP motor carrier officers will join their colleagues in law enforcement, the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA), and the organization, Truckers Against Trafficking (TAT) to educate commercial vehicle drivers about the signs of human trafficking and to enforce laws that crack down on traffickers. The goal of the week-long, nationwide initiative is to educate individuals in positions to observe human trafficking taking place, such as commercial motor ve-hicle drivers, public transportation companies, rest area attendants and truck stop employees, so they can alert law enforcement.

Individuals can look for these red flags that may indicate a person is being trafficked: of-ten, they do not have control of their identity documents, they appear to be monitored by another person when talking or interacting with others, they show signs of branding or tattooing of a trafficker's name (often on the neck) and of bruising, or the observation of a vehicle in a mainly male area dropping women off and picking them up 15 - 20 minutes later.

"Human trafficking is a detestable crime, and there is no room for it on our roadways," said Col. James F. Grady II, director of the MSP. "Transportation workers and all who use our public thoroughfares can play a key role in interrupting human trafficking when they learn to recognize the signs and are prepared to report it."

To report suspected human trafficking, call the National Human Trafficking Resources Center at 888-373-7888 or text BeFree to 233733.

In 2024, CVED personnel conducted 41 TAT and human trafficking awareness presenta-tions reaching over 1,800 people. These presentations were conducted at rest areas, to trucking companies, civic organizations, victim advocate groups, religious organizations, colleges, police personnel and state agencies.

The MSP first partnered with TAT in 2015 and has since been recognized as a national leader in human trafficking awareness and education. For more information about TAT, vis-it truckersagainsttrafficking.org.

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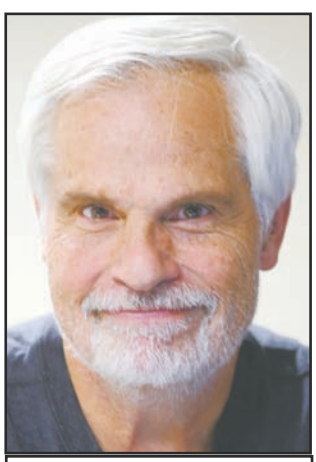
FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

VIEWPOINT

Is insurance claim worth chopping your feet off?



MIKE'S MUSINGS

MIKE WILCOX
PUBLISHER

In the midst of all the drama many of us experience I thought I'd write about an unusual story, actually better words would be strange and bizarre, that comes from the Ozarks in Missouri.

Here's the setup:

A man wanted to cash in on an insurance policy by staging a bloody farm equipment accident. A press release had been sent out by local police indicating a man had lost both his feet in a staged encounter with a brush hog.

Upon arrival by medics and law enforcement officers, however no feet were found.

Police pieced together what had really happened. The man in his 60's had recruited a man from Florida to cut off his legs with a hatchet. Police were not convinced that this was a brush hog accident, noting that the hatchet cuts were too clean. A brush hog would have left a bloody mess.

Because the man had not yet filed his false insurance claim he couldn't be charged with a crime. Police thought about jailing him for make a false police report, but the man was laying in a hospital bed, severely injured, and they believed that was another punishment.

But the missing feet were still a mystery. Where the heck did they end up? Apparently a couple days later a relative snooping around the house found them in a bucket obscured by tires.

Moral of the story- If you intend to commit insurance fraud there are easier solutions than chopping off body parts.

My head is one big blur with all the activities going on this weekend and Monday. First Saturday night, my beloved Detroit Lions play the Washington Commanders in their first playoff game and march to the Super Bowl. That next day is my birthday, lol.

On Monday, we honor Martin Luther King, on his birthday. At the same time is Inauguration Day, in which President Donald Trump will be crowned the 47th president. Later that night Ohio State will take on Notre Dame for the college football championship.

For the most part I will be glued to the television, that is, when I'm not working.

It is sad for me to report, Wilcox Newspapers has sold its only Alabama newspaper, The LaFayette Sun, to a publisher in a neighboring community. It is sad because I lived in that community for five years and got to know a good number of people. But I haven't been back there in four years, and it makes much more sense to have a local person publish the newspaper, than me from afar.

I owned and published The Sun for 10 years. It was a good run. The people of Chambers County welcomed this northern guy with open arms and I can't express enough appreciation to all those that helped us along the way, particularly the employees. Publishing a newspaper is not easy in this digital age, but somehow there and in our other communities, people seem to enjoy a weekly newspaper. Knowing that means we will be around for many years to come.

Life as Performance Art

G CORWIN STOPPEL

According to physicians, therapists, pollsters and others, we are sadder than in the past. We smile less and feel gloomier, leaving many without much hope or enthusiasm for the future.

In fact, about one in four, or some two billion people, report they don't have the old zip and bounce in their step. One study says only 20 percent of us didn't even bother to make New Year's Resolutions this month. This type of sadness is often expressed as apathy.

Being cheerful has gone out of fashion and treated as a suspicious behavior. Smiling with intent may get one arrested or canceled because it is too elitist, privileged and must have something to do with the exploitation of someone on the margins of society.

Apathy and sadness are usually based on mourning and frustration. The older we get, the easier it can be to get that way.

The pandemic and Great Shutdown of five years ago was hard on us and that pain lingers. Remember those white circles on the floor at checkout lines that instructed us to keep six feet away from others? No more seeing an old friend and shaking hands or air-kissing. No sliding up to someone to tell a joke or the latest news.

As for masks the only fun about them was walking into a bank without setting off alarms. Even that got old after a while.

Gone were dinner parties, having friends over for conversation and refreshments, board games and cards. Gone were lunches, shopping trips and day trips. Someday they would return and it would be life as normal.

Meanwhile, we Zoomed, video chatted, did business and held remote meetings from home. Meanwhile, we lost opportunities to advance in our careers or travel to places we wanted to see.

As the months dragged on, we kept promising ourselves that just soon as health officials sounded the all-clear, things would return to normal. Once that happened, we would pick up where we left off and party like it was 2018.

It hasn't worked out that way. One example came from a priest who lamented that his parish's men's group probably will die out in another year.

"I think women find it easier to make connections," he said. "Men need the connection there for them. It is terrible that something this important is dying as we helplessly watch."

I recently heard a podcast from a bishop who told how, back when he was ordained, there were nearly 200 parishes in his diocese. A decade ago there were 100. He predicts by the end of this decade there will be no more than 70. Compounding the problem is an acute shortage of priests.

Many community and fraternal groups and service organizations see declines as well. Older members die off and new ones don't take their place.

We mourn for how much we lost during the pandemic, know there is little chance we can make up for lost time and it leaves us saddened.

A friend and fellow writer from Minnesota turned 80 this past year. He did not find this milestone demoralizing. turn that milestone age and find it demoralizing.

"That's the sell-by and expiration date according to the Good Book," he wrote, "and I'm not ready for that to happen. There is still more I want to do, if only I could get my body to go along with the plan."

That's the ticket to break free of this malaise, and surprisingly it is based on Isaac Newton's First Law of Motion: A body in motion tends to stay in motion; a body at rest tends to stay in rest. As President Theodore Roosevelt said, "Take Action!"

Every small accomplishment or success gives us a sense of optimism and hope. Many people use a checklist of tasks to be completed. Check a few off and we feel better about themselves.

Taking action helps, but we also need other people and a sense of community. Scrooge was described as being as solitary as an oyster, and his personality was cold, lonely and miserable. The money he made was doing no good for anyone, not even himself. It was only when he learned to reconnect with the wider community he found joy

My wife Pat and I recently saw a harried mother at the grocery store trying to herd four young children. They kids smiled at and said "Hi" to us as if we were long-lost friends. They wanted a sense of belonging in an adult world.

Or walk into a retirement home, where residents sitting in the front lobby look at you, smile and hold out their hands. They want and need human contact, as we all do.

A friend who'd retired from Al Capone's long-ago Chicago Outfit told me, "We never had meetings. We had sit-downs, and there were rules and a lot of respect.

"Respect is a big thing," he went on. "Respect for the (street) captain and the boss, but you spoke your peace. Face to face we hashed things out because we were a family. Respect came first."

That method is in contrast with many college students who find it hard to meet face-to-face with people. Most were in high school during the pandemic, missing out on learning to function in society. They are wary of others and saying something that might not be popular. To have to carry on a conversation, much less speak in front of classmates, is a terrifying experience for them.

Unfortunately, that leads to more isolation, depression and loneliness. If you want to turn your life around, get up, take action and connect with more people. Go stir things up, but don't forget the element of respect.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Paw Paw Rotary 5K Santa Run

Letter to the Editor:

On Dec. 14, our Paw Paw Area Rotary Club held the 13th annual Paw Paw Rotary 5K Santa Run. Santas running through the streets of Paw Paw spreading holiday cheer the second Saturday in December has become a tradition enjoyed by hundreds of runners, walkers, and their families. This happy community family event couldn't happen without help from many in our community and surrounding area.

We extend our thanks to the Village of Paw Paw, the Paw Paw Village Police Department, the Paw Paw Department of Public Services, the Paw Paw Fire Department, the Van Buren County Sheriff's Office, and all who helped keep our route safe. Thank you to Freshwater Community Church for hosting our event and for their volunteers who helped along our route. A special thanks to Freshwater staff members Ann Leary and Craig Warner for all of their support, and to Carlie Hancox and Kevin Romeo for providing us with live holiday music. Thank you to Family Fare and Biggby Coffee for generously providing our runners with fruit, snacks, and coffee and hot chocolate. A special thank you to Patrick Bauschke of Betzler Funeral Home for his continued work managing our route and overseeing our stock of Santa suits. Thank you to Paul Garrod and The Courier-Leader for many years of great coverage of our Santa Run. Thank you to everyone else who helped make this another successful event. We appreciate all of you!

All proceeds from our Santa Run go to support our Rotary Club's efforts both nationally and locally. Many area businesses are longtime supporters of our Santa Run. Their donations in December make it possible for our club to provide support throughout the year to meet local requests for help, and to support Rotary International's initiatives to improve lives around the world. This year's business sponsors include Bloomingdale Communications, Edward Jones, Paw Paw, John Tapper Automotive/Tapper Ford, Anna's Top to Bottom Cleaning Service, and Great Lakes Belting and Supply. We thank you all for making our good works possible.

The Paw Paw Area Rotary Club

Reader disputes editor's position on TikTok

Dear Editor:

Oh, Mike, what a heartfelt and bold defense of the digital opiate of the masses. Truly, your arguments about TikTok's innocence and Congress's supposed authoritarian tendencies have moved me to tears—of laughter. Let's unpack your opus with the care it so desperately deserves.

First, your assertion that TikTok's U.S.-based executives and "thousands of American investors" mean the app couldn't possibly pose a risk to national security is simply adorable. It's as if you believe the mere presence of American businesspeople magically transforms any venture into a beacon of virtue. By that logic, should we assume that because international banks operate in the U.S., no financial crimes ever happen? Delightful.

Your skepticism about TikTok's connection to the Chinese government is charmingly naive. ByteDance is, after all, subject to Chinese laws that mandate cooperation with state intelligence efforts. But, sure, let's take their word that no data is being shared. After all, tech companies never bend the truth about data privacy, right? (Insert cough Facebook cough here.)

Speaking of Facebook and Instagram, your "whataboutism" is truly masterful. Yes, these platforms have their issues—algorithms promoting divisiveness, spreading misinformation, and yes, being exploited by bad actors. But do two wrongs make a right? If one restaurant violates health codes, should we shrug and let another serve up salmonella? You suggest regulation for all or none, as though nuance and targeted oversight are foreign concepts. It's almost as if you believe Congress is incapable of walking and chewing gum at the same time. (Admittedly, you may have a point there.)

Then, there's your favorite libertarian buzzword: regulations. Aren't they just the worst? I mean, who needs seatbelt laws or building codes when we could just trust people to make smart choices? You lament that the government is overstepping, but when private platforms shape public discourse and wield influence over millions, some oversight seems less like authoritarianism and more like common sense.

Oh, and Rand Paul's quip about "emulating Chinese authoritarians"? Chef's kiss, Mike. Truly. Because nothing screams "defense of democracy" like letting a foreign-influenced app operate unchecked because we're too scared of looking like the bad guys. Newsflash: Regulating TikTok doesn't make us authoritarian; it makes us responsible. It's not about banning fun, Mike—it's about addressing the potential national security and societal impacts of an app that vacuums up data like a Black Friday sale at the NSA.

Lastly, your plea for parental regulation as the panacea for all of TikTok's ills is positively quaint. Sure, let's put all the onus on parents to monitor their kids' every swipe and like. Because parents clearly have nothing else to worry about in this digital age where technology evolves faster than a toddler with a tablet.

Mike, your piece is a delightful cocktail of misplaced confidence and oversimplification. The next time you pen a defense of Big Tech disguised as a libertarian manifesto, maybe consider adding a pinch of critical thinking to your recipe. In the meantime, I'll be over here, scrolling responsibly—on an app that's hopefully subject to more than just good vibes and wishful thinking.

Name withheld upon request

Full steam ahead, DOGE

Dear Editor:

I just have to respond to the many inaccuracies in Mr. Erickson's letter on the National Debt.

It is not the tax cuts that created the increase in the national debt. The tax cuts increased revenue for the government. It is the out of control spending by Congress. Many have said that Congress is spending OUR money like drunken Sailors. There is a difference. Sailors are spending their money. Congress is spending OUR money!

Mr. Erickson omits the fact that President Trump has been out of office for the last 4 years. The national debt has ballooned the last 4 years under President Biden. Why doesn't Mr. Erickson blame President Biden? I am curious.

If President Trump's DOGE can get close to the goal of Two Trillion Dollars of government waste, we will be in a budget surplus. Add to that an increase in revenue from a growing economy. For the first time since Speaker Gingrich pushed through the Contract With America our debt will not be increasing.

Speaker Gingrich faced constant criticism from President Clinton who derided the cuts in spending and limits on spending in the Contract With America constantly. Speaker Gingrich said it would balance the budget in seven years. The result was it only took three and a half years. When that happened, President Clinton with the help of the press claimed all the credit for what Speaker Gingrich did.

DOGE will face constant criticism from Democrats and their Press over every program that is cut or eliminated. Everyone will be a disaster if the cuts are allowed. It will not happen. It will only be a disaster for the unneeded bureaucrats that now have to get a real job in the private sector. When DOGE like the Contract With America succeeds, the Press that will give Democrats and not President Trump all the credit. History will repeat itself.

America needs a Congress that will stop wasting our money. It is not their money. It is our money. We need to demand our Representative and Senators stop wasting our money!

Go DOGE!

Sincerely;

Willam A. Geresy

THE COURIER LEADER
PAW PAW FLASHES
SOUTH HAVEN BEACON

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PUBLIC NOTICE

State of Michigan Probate Court Van Buren
PUBLICATION OF NOTICE OF HEARING
File No. 1993-0005-TV
IN THE MATTER OF ALYSIA SPARKS SPECIAL NEEDS TRUST
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS INCLUDING:
Susan Grimm and Alysia Sparks
Whose address(es) is/are unknown and whose interest in the matter may be barred or affected by the following:
TAKE NOTICE: A hearing will be held on February 5,2025 at 9:00 a.m. at 212 E. Paw Paw St., Paw Paw, MI 49079 before Judge Susan Metzger #P62867 for the following purpose:
Petition to Allow 3rd Annual Account
In Person or Via Zoom - Virtual Meeting Room 3 Meeting ID: 877 444 5820
January 8,2025
Attorney:
Oliver S. Howell #P81470
350 E. Michigan Ave., Ste. 500
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
(269) 382-5300
Petitioner:
Oliver S. Howell #P81470
350 E. Michigan Ave., Ste. 500
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
(269) 382-5300

State of Michigan probate Court Van Buren
NOTICE TO CREDITORS DECEDENT'S ESTATE
FILE NO.
Estate of MARY C. GAVE, DECEASED
Date of Birth: December 10, 1933 (12/10/1933)
TO ALL CREDITORS:
Notice to Creditors: The decedent, Mary C. Gave, who lived at 80228 29th Street, Lawton, MI 49065, died October 15,2024 (10/15/2024).
No probate estate is currently contemplated for the decedent. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the decedent and the Mary C. Gave Living Trust dated June 6, 2005, as amended, will be forever barred unless presented to: Donald R. France, Trustee of the Mary C. Gave Living Trust dated June 6, 2005, as amended, withing 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.
December 30,2024
Attorney:
Laura E. Volkmann #P71882
5830 Venture Park
Kalamazoo, MI 49009
269-459-1432
Personal Representative
Donald R. France
P.O.Box 247
Marcellus, MI 49067
269-646-5345

State of Michigan probate Court Van Buren
NOTICE TO CREDITORS DECEDENT'S ESTATE
FILE NO.
Decedent: MYRON EUGENE RHODES
Date of Birth: February 11, 1936
TO ALL CREDITORS:
NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, **MYRON EUGENE RHODES** , who lived at 22637 M-43 Highway Almena Township , Michigan 49009 died December 17, 2024. There is no probate estate.
Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the **MYRON EUGENE RHODES OR THE MYRON EUGENE RHODES IRREVOCABLE TRUST** dated **March 27, 2003, as amended and restated in total on January 23, 2008 and May 28, 2019,** will be forever barred unless presented to **Diana Curtis**, the named successor trustee within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.
January 7, 2025
Attorney
William B. Millard P39054
DeMent and Marquardt, PLC
211 E. Water Street, Suite 401
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
(269) 343-2106
Trustee Name
Diana Curtis
2912 Wingate Dr. SE
Kentwood, MI 49512
(616) 975-1598

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT VAN BUREN COUNTY
Van Buren County Courthouse, 212 E. Paw Paw Street, Ste 220, Paw Paw, MI 49079
(269) 657-8225
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate
File No. 2023-1107-DE
Estate of Robert W. White, Deceased
Date of birth: November 1, 1941
TO ALL CREDITORS:
NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Robert W. White, died August 30, 2022. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Kurt White, named personal representative, or to both the probate court at Van Buren County Courthouse, 212 E. Paw Paw Street, Ste 220, Paw Paw, MI 49079 and the named personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.
Notice is further given that the estate will be thereafter assigned and distributed to the persons entitled to it.
Date: January 7, 2025
Kurt White
40 Back Street
Newfane, VT 05345
(802 380-0989

STATE OF MICHIGAN
IN THE 36th CIRCUIT COURT
FOR THE COUNTY OF VAN BUREN
NOTICE OF HEARING TO AMEND LAKE LEVEL ORDER
SADDLE LAKE

DATE:	**February 4, 2025**
TIME:	**2:30 PM**
LOCATION:	**Van Buren County Circuit Court** **212 E Paw Paw Street** **Paw Paw, Michigan 49079**
QUESTIONS:	**(269) 205-3293** **vanburencdc@gmail.com**

Hearing to Amend Lake Level Order
A petition dated December 9, 2024 was filed with the Van Buren County Circuit Court to amend the lake level order for Saddle Lake. The Van Buren County Circuit Court will review the petition on the above date, time, and location to receive evidence to amend the lake level order for Saddle Lake, located in Columbia Township, Van Buren County, Michigan, consistent with the provisions of MCL 324.30707.
Submitting Testimony and Evidence
The public may submit written testimony and provide evidence regarding the petition and this matter to the Court. The public may also attend the hearing on the above date, time, and location to provide oral testimony and/or evidence. The Court will accept written testimony and evidence via email at **Carrierp@vanburencountymi.gov** or by mail addressed to the **Van Buren County Circuit Court, 212 E Paw Paw Street, Paw Paw, Michigan 49079. When providing written testimony or evidence, include the subject-line "Saddle Lake – Lake Level Hearing (Case No. 24-074426-CZ)."** Please call the Court at **(269) 657-8200, ext. 2346 (please direct other inquiries to the phone number at the top of this notice) with any questions regarding submitting written materials.**

For additional information regarding the hearing, please call (269) 205-3293 or email vanburencdc@gmail.com. A recorded webinar about the lake level order and court hearing is also posted at: https://www.vanburencountymi.gov/902/Saddle-Lake-Level-Lake-Level-Order.

Hearing Accommodations
Persons with disabilities who need accommodations to attend the hearing should call the Court at **(269) 657-8200, ext. 2340 (please direct other inquiries to the phone number at the top of this notice)** or by using the Michigan Relay Service at 7-1-1 (TDD) at least 24 hours in advance of the hearing to coordinate accommodations. All property owners affected may participate in the hearing by either submitting written testimony and/or evidence or by attending the court hearing to present testimony.
Joe Parman
Van Buren County Drain Commissioner
on behalf of the Saddle Lake – Lake Level District

STEPHEN W. SMITH, P70723
Miller Johnson Schroeder, PLC
728 Pleasant Street, Suite 101
St. Joseph, MI 49085
(269) 983-1000

Porter Township
Van Buren County
88040 M-40 Lawton, MI 49065
Regular Meeting
December 11, 2024
Supervisor Oxley called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Members present – Oxley, Bitely, Nesbitt, Packer, and Smith. Also present – Attorney Moraitis and four guests.
- Motion by Bitely with support by Packer to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on November 13, 2024. Voice vote – all yes. Motion passed.
- Motion by Smith with support by Packer to approve the Treasurer's report subject to audit. Voice vote – all yes. Motion passed.
- Motion by Packer with support by Bitely to approve the bills as presented. Roll call vote – all yes. Motion passed.
- Motion by Bitely with support by Packer to approve the updated Marijuana Ordinance 2013-3 as amended. Roll call vote – all yes. Motion passed.
- Motion by Smith with support by Nesbitt to reappoint current Board of Review Members for the 2025-2026 term – Harold Laski, Norman Smith, Martha Wright, and Greg Brucks (alternate). Voice call vote – all yes. Motion passed.
- Motion by Bitely with support by Nesbitt to pay Engineering Consultant Alan Smaka for continued work on Bankson Lake project at amount not to exceed $624. Roll call vote – all yes. Motion passed.
- Motion by Bitely with support by Packer to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 pm. Voice vote – all yes. Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,
Heather Smith
Porter Township Clerk

COUNTY: VAN BUREN; MTGR: DILLON SHELDON; ATTY: TEAM X; 1ST PUB: 1/9/2025; ATTY FILE #: 516165F02; INSURER: (UNKNOWN)
NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE BY ADVERTISEMENT
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on February 13, 2025. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Dillon Sheldon, a married man
Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): Freedom Mortgage Corporation
Date of Mortgage: May 6, 2022
Date of Mortgage Recording: May 12, 2022
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $147,627.70
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in City of Gobles, Van Buren County, Michigan, and described as: Lot(s) 8, Block 7, VILLAGE OF GOBLEVILLE, NOW CITY OF GOBLES, according to the recorded plat thereof, as recorded in Liber 19 of Plats, Page 634.
Common street address (if any): 108 Glover St, Gobles, MI 49055-9692
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: January 9, 2025
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1549575
(01-09)(01-30)

COUNTY: VAN BUREN; MTGR: BRIAN EVES; ATTY: HOLZMAN, RITTER & LEDUC, PLLC - HOLZMAN CORKERY, PLLC; 1ST PUB: 1/9/2025; ATTY FILE #: (N/A); INSURER: (UNKNOWN)
MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE NOTICE Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under Section 3212 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 P.M., on February 13, 2025. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. Brian Eves, an unmarried man, ("Mortgagor"), gave a mortgage to Advia Credit Union, ("Mortgagee"), dated June 6, 2022, and recorded on June 10, 2022, in Liber 1739, on Page 459, Van Buren County Records, Michigan. On the date of this notice, there is claimed to be due the principal of Fifty-Three Thousand Three Hundred Seventy-Four Dollars and 82/100 Dollars ($53,374.82) plus accrued interest at 9.000% per annum. Under the power of sale contained in said mortgage and the statute in such case made and provided, notice is hereby given that said mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at the place of holding in the circuit court within Van Buren County, Michigan @ 1:00 P.M. on Thursday, February 13, 2025. Said premises are situated in the Township of Pine Grove, County of Van Buren, State of Michigan, and are described as: Lot 5, VILLAGE OF KENDALL, as recorded in Liber 19, Page 554 of Plats, Van Buren County Records. Commonly: 26853 County Road 288, Gobles MI 49055—Tax Id #80-15-065-004-00 The redemption period shall be six months from the date of such sale unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale. If the property is sold at a foreclosure sale, under Section 600.3278 of the Michigan Compiled Laws, the Mortgagor will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Dated: January 9, 2025 Advia Credit Union, Mortgagee Holzman Law, PLLC By: Charles J. Holzman Attorney for Mortgagee 28366 Franklin Road Southfield, Michigan 48034 (248) 352-4340
(01-09)(02-06)

NOTICE BY PUBLICATION
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF
VAN BUREN COUNTY

Audrey Sperling Revocable Living Trust/ Estate of Audrey Sperling

Case No. 24-74373-CH

To: Estate of Charles Bryce Engle and Estate of Sandra Engle

Notice is hereby given to Estate of Charles Bryce Engle and Estate of Sandra Engle, whose whereabouts are unknown and cannot be ascertained after diligent search and inquiry, that a compliant for quiet title action has been filed against them in the Circuit Court of Van Buren County, located at 212 E. Paw Paw, Paw Paw, Michigan 49079.

The nature of the proceedings is as follows: This is a petition for quiet title actions on the grounds of that a land contract was paid in full and there currently resides a interest that belongs to the Defendant on title affecting the ability of the Plaintiff to transfer ownership of the property. The Plaintiff seeks that this cloud on title be resolved and requests that the court award all ownership interest to be transferred to the Plaintiff.

You are required to appear and defend against this action by filing your response with the court and serving a copy upon the Plaintiff's attorney on or before 3 weeks after the initial running of this notice , which was on January 16,2025 (1/16/25). Failure to do so may result in a judgment by default being entered against you for the relief demanded in the petition.

COUNTY: VAN BUREN; MTGR: NATE MENCK; ATTY: ORLANS; 1ST PUB: 12/26/2024; ATTY FILE #: 24-015945; INSURER: (UNKNOWN)
ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM on JANUARY 23, 2025. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
Default has been made in the conditions of a mortgage made by Nate Menck, a single person, to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for M&I Bank FSB, Mortgagee, dated July 8, 2005 and recorded July 25, 2005 in Liber 1442, Page 482 Van Buren County Records, Michigan. Said mortgage is now held by The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, National Association fka The Bank of New York Trust Company, N.A. as successor to JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A., as Trustee for Residential Asset Mortgage Products, Inc., Mortgage Asset-Backed Pass-Through Certificates Series 2005-RZ3, by assignment. There is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of Eighty-Three Thousand Three Hundred Eight and 59/100 Dollars ($83,308.59). Under the power of sale contained in said mortgage and the statute in such case made and provided, notice is hereby given that said mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at public venue at the place of holding the circuit court within Van Buren County, Michigan at 1:00 PM on JANUARY 23, 2025.
Said premises are located in the Township of Almena, Van Buren County Michigan, and are described as:
PART OF THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION 16, TOWN 2 SOUTH, RANGE 13 WEST, DESCRIBED AS BEGINNING AT A POINT ON THE EAST SECTION LINE AT THE INTERSECTION OF WHISKEY RUN ROAD; THENCE NORTHWESTERLY ALONG THE CENTERLINE A DISTANCE OF 450 FEET; THENCE NORTHEASTERLY AT RIGHT ANGLES TO SAID ROAD, A DISTANCE OF 400 FEET; THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY PARALLEL TO THE CENTERLINE OF WHISKEY RUN TO SAID EAST SECTION LINE; THENCE SOUTHERLY ALONG SAID CENTERLINE TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.
34201 Whiskey Run Road, Mattawan, Michigan 49071
The redemption period shall be 12 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA §600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale.
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damage to the property during the redemption period.
Dated: December 26, 2024
File No. 24-015945
Firm Name: Orlans PC
Firm Address: 1650 West Big Beaver Road, Troy MI 48084
Firm Phone Number: (248) 502.1400
(12-26)(01-16)

COUNTY: VAN BUREN; MTGR: FELICIA A FRENCH; ATTY: TEAM H; 1ST PUB: 1/9/2025; ATTY FILE #: 499077F05; INSURER: (UNKNOWN NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE BY ADVERTISEMENT
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on February 13, 2025. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Felicia A. French, an unmarried woman
Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Center, LLC
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): None
Date of Mortgage: July 3, 2017
Date of Mortgage Recording: July 6, 2017
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $108,424.56
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Township of Decatur, Van Buren County, Michigan, and described as: Beginning on the North and South 1/4 line of Section 1, Town 4 South, Range 14 West, at a point South 00 degrees 06 minutes 45 seconds East 1232.55 feet from the North 1/4 post of said Section 1; and running thence South 00 degrees 06 minutes 45 seconds along said 1/4 line, 261.36 feet; thence East, parallel with the North line of said Section 1, 500 feet; thence North 00 degrees 06 minutes 45 seconds West 261.36 feet; thence West 500 feet to the point of beginning.
Common street address (if any): 72999 County Road 665, Lawton, MI 49065-9421
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: January 9, 2025
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1549520
(01-09)(01-30)

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE
THIS FIRM IS A DEBT COLLECTOR; THIS IS AN ATTEMPT TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. "ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the

Continues on page 8

CITY OF BANGOR
City Council
PUBLIC HEARING

The **Bangor City Council** will hold a **Public Hearing** on **Tuesday, January 21, 2025.** This hearing will occur during the **Regular City Council Meeting** at **7:00 PM** at **Bangor City Hall** in the **Council Room** located at **257 W Monroe St, Bangor, MI 49013**

The purpose of the public hearing is to address charges alleging that a Planning Commission Member has failed to fulfill the duties required.

This meeting is accessible.
Persons requiring auxiliary aides and services, or other accommodations, should contact the City Clerk in writing, by telephone at 269.427.5831, or by emailing clerk@bangormi.org
Shelly Umbanhowar, City Clerk

PUBLIC NOTICE

Continues from page 7

party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice."
Default having been made in the condition of a Future Advance Mortgage, dated November 21, 2008, by Charles Kirby, Sally A. Kirby husband and wife and Charles E. A. Kirby, , as Mortgagors, to FIRST STATE BANK OF DECATUR, a Michigan Banking Corporation, as Mortgagee, and recorded on November 24, 2008, at Liber 1510, Page 290, Van Buren County Records, on which Mortgage there is claimed to be due and unpaid at the date of this Notice of Sale SIXY SIX THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED FIFTY AND 66/100 ($66,750.66) DOLLARS, principal; THREE THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED SEVENTY AND 00/100 (3,270.00) DOLLARS, interest to 12/22/24; plus interest at the rate of 8.46% from and after November 7, 2023, ONE THOUSAND AND NO/ IOO ($1,000.00) DOLLARS, late charges and THREE HUNDRED AND 10/100 ($310.00) for force placed insurance, for a total of SEVENTY ONE THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED THIRTY AND 66/100 ($71,330.66), as of the date of this notice, which amount may or may not be the entire indebtedness owed by Charles Kirby, Sally A. Kirby and Charles E. A. Kirby, husband and wife to FIRST STATE BANK OF DECATUR. The amount due on the mortgage might be greater on the day of the sale and that a foreclosure sale doesn't entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. No legal or equitable proceeding having been instituted to recover the debt, or any part of the debt, secured by said Mortgage, and the power of sale in said Mortgage contained has become operative by reason of such default. By reason of such default, the Mortgagor has declared the entire unpaid amount of said mortgage due and payable forthwith.
Notice is hereby given that on February 13, 2025, at 1 PM at the East Entrance lobby of the Van Buren County Courthouse, 212 E. Paw Paw Street, Paw Paw, Michigan, 49079, that being the place of holding the Circuit Court in and for the County, there will be offered for sale and sold to the highest bidder, at public sale, for the purpose of satisfying the amounts due and unpaid upon the mortgage, together with interest at 4.600 per cent, legal costs, attorney fees and also any taxes and insurance that the Mortgagee pays before the sale, and expenses of sale, as provided by law and in the mortgage, or so much thereof, as may be necessary to satisfy the debt, the lands and premises mentioned and described in the mortgage is as follows: Property located in the Township of Decatur, County of Van Buren, and State of Michigan, described as follows:
Part of the Southeast Quarter of Section 26, Town 4 South, Range 15 West, described as: Commencing at the Southeast corner of said Section ; thence West along the South line of said Section, 1994.00 feet to a point which is 634.60 feet East the South Quarter corner of said Section; thence North at right angles to said South line, 834.09 feet; thence South 89 degrees 29'51" East, 1586.07 feet; thence South 75 degrees 30'39" East, 48.53 feet to the point of beginning; thence North 00 degrees 26'59" West, parallel with the East line of said Section, 197.46 feet; thence South 88 degrees 00'00" East, 354.975 feet to the East line of said Section; thence South 00 degrees 26'59" East along said East line, 240.00 feet; thence South 89 degrees 37'23" West, 345.69 feet; thence North 09 degrees 20'36" West, 57.97 feet to the point of beginning.
Parcel No. 80-10-026-008-20 commonly referred to as 91402 Celery Center Road, Decatur, Michigan 49045.
Notice is further given that the length of the redemption period will be six (6) months from the date of sale, unless the premises are abandoned. If the premises are abandoned, the redemption period will be the later of thirty (30) days from the date of sale or upon expiration of fifteen (15) days after the Mortgagor is given notice pursuant to MCL 600.3241a(b) that the premises are considered abandoned and Mortgagor, Mortgagor's heirs, executor or administrator or a person lawfully claiming from or under one (1) of them has not given the written notice required by MCL 600.3241 a(c) stating that the premises are not abandoned.
TO ALL PURCHASERS: the foreclosing mortgagee can rescind the Sheriff's Sale in the event a third party buys the property and there is a simultaneous resolution with the Mortgagors. In that event, your damages, if any, are limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at the sale, plus any applicable interest.
If the property is sold at a foreclosure sale, the Mortgagor(s) will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
DATED: January 7, 2025 Brian T. DeVries
Attorney for Mortgagee First State Bank
P.O. Box 329
Schoolcraft, MI 49087 (269) 679-4535

(1-16)(2-6)

COUNTY: VAN BUREN; MTGR: BILLIE LOU TAYLOR; ATTY: WELTMAN, WEINBERG & REIS CO., L.P.A. - WELTMAN, WEINBERG & REIS CO., L.P.A.; 1ST PUB: 1/16/2025; ATTY FILE #: 24-001291; INSURER: (UNKNOWN)
FORECLOSURE NOTICE (ALL COUNTIES) AS A DEBT COLLECTOR, WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: IF YOU ARE A MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER ON ACTIVE DUTY, IF YOUR PERIOD OF ACTIVE DUTY HAS CONCLUDED LESS THAN 90 DAYS AGO, OR IF YOU HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO ACTIVE DUTY, PLEASE CONTACT THE ATTORNEY FOR THE PARTY FORECLOSING THE MORTGAGE AT THE TELEPHONE NUMBER STATED IN THIS NOTICE. Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement – Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM a.m./p.m. on February 13, 2025. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. Default having been made in the terms and conditions of a certain mortgage made by Billie Lou Taylor AKA Billie Lou Danielson and Rodney Cartwright and Joshua Danielson. of Van Buren County, Michigan, Mortgagor to Fifth Third Bank (Western Michigan) dated the 24th day of June, 2004, and recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds, for the County of Van Buren and State of Michigan, on the 29th day of July, 2004, Liber 1418, Page 854, of the Van Buren County Records on which mortgage there is claimed to be due, at the date of this notice, for principal of $14,739.35 plus accrued interest at 8.25000% percent per annum. Which said premises are described as follows: All that certain piece or parcel of land situated in the Township of Lawrence, in the County of Van Buren and State of Michigan and described as follows to wit: Beginning on the East line of Section 7, Town 3 South, Range 15 West, at a point in the center line of Red Arrow Highway 1040.00 feet North of the Southeast Corner of the Section; thence North 88 degrees 31 minutes 00 seconds West on the center line of Red Arrow Highway, 200.56; thence continue North 81 degrees 55 minutes 00 seconds West on the center line, 83.61 feet; thence North 242.66 feet; thence south 89 degrees 09 minutes 00 seconds East 283.30 feet to the East Section line; thence South on same, 255.41 feet to the place of beginning. Commonly known as: 56080 Red Arrow Highway, Lawrence, MI 49064 Tax ID: 80-13-007-051-20 If the property is sold at a foreclosure sale the borrower, pursuant to MCLA 600.3278 will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. The redemption period shall be twelve months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale. Dated: January 16, 2025 By: Benjamin N. Hoen #P-81415 Weltman, Weinberg & Reis Co., L.P.A. 5990 West Creek Road, Suite 200 Independence, OH 44131 Telephone: 216-739-5100 Fax: 216-363-4034 Email: bhoen@weltman.com WWR#: 24-001291-1

(01-16)(02-06)

COUNTY: VAN BUREN; MTGR: ERNEST JAMES COREY; ATTY: ORLANS; 1ST PUB: 1/16/2025; ATTY FILE #: 24-015961; INSURER: FHLMC
ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM on FEBRUARY 13, 2025. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
Default has been made in the conditions of a mortgage made by Ernest James Corey, an unmarried man, to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Old Kent Mortgage Company, Mortgagee, dated March 28, 2001 and recorded April 3, 2001 in Liber 1329, Page 367 Van Buren County Records, Michigan. Said mortgage is now held by Fifth Third Bank, N. A., by assignment. There is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of Thirty-Two Thousand Four Hundred Seventy-Five and 69/100 Dollars ($32,475.69).
Under the power of sale contained in said mortgage and the statute in such case made and provided, notice is hereby given that said mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at public venue at the place of holding the circuit court within Van Buren County, Michigan at 1:00 PM on FEBRUARY 13, 2025.
Said premises are located in the Township of Paw Paw, Van Buren County Michigan, and are described as:
Part of the Southeast Quarter of Section 35, Town 3 South, Range 14 West, described as commencing at the Southeast corner of said Section 35; thence Westerly along the South line of said Section to the Southeast corner of the West 10 acres of the East 30 acres of the Southeast Quarter of said Southeast Quarter according to the Government survey thereof and the point of beginning of the land herein described; thence Northerly along the East line of the West 10 acres of the East 30 acres of the Southeast Quarter of said Southeast Quarter according to the Government Survey thereof to the North line of the Southeast Quarter of said Southeast Quarter according to the Government Survey thereof; thence Westerly along said North line to the West line of the West 10 acres of the East 30 acres of the Southeast Quarter of said Southeast Quarter according to the Government Survey thereof; thence Southerly along said West line to the South line of Section 35; thence Easterly along said South line to the place of beginning.
36176 72nd Avenue, Decatur, Michigan 49045
The redemption period shall be 12 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA §600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale.
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damage to the property during the redemption period.
Dated: January 16, 2025
File No. 24-015961
Firm Name: Orlans Law Group PLLC
Firm Address: 1650 West Big Beaver Road, Troy MI 48084
Firm Phone Number: (248) 502.1400

(01-16)(02-06)

COUNTY: VAN BUREN; MTGR: NATHAN ENDERS; ATTY: HLADIK ONORATO & FEDERMAN LLP - HLADIK ONORATO & FEDERMAN LLP; 1ST PUB: 1/16/2025; ATTY FILE #: 24-03380; INSURER: FHA
MORTGAGE SALE - Pursuant to the terms and conditions of a certain mortgage and by virtue of the power of sale contained in said mortgage, made by Nathan Enders and Brandi Enders, husband and wife, Mortgagors, to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc (MERS) as nominee for Success Mortgage Partners, Inc, Mortgagee, dated the 20th day of April, 2018 and recorded

Continues on page 9

MCS HS AND MS FIRE ALARM UPGRADES
BID PACKAGE NO. 1D

Mattawan, MI
AVB-25-001 (HS) and AVB-25-002 (MS)

BID ANNOUNCEMENT
AVB Construction, LLC is preparing to upgrade the fire alarm systems in the high school and the middle school for Mattawan Consolidated Schools. Commencement of construction will be stated in a future addendum.
AVB is performing multiple projects at Mattawan Consolidated Schools over the next 2 years.

BID INFORMATION
Contact Wendy Lockner for access to bidders' instructions, plans and specifications:
wlockner@avbinc.com • 860-874-9577

All bidders must supply a bid bond. Payment of a minimum of the prevailing wage rate is a requirement of this project. Refer to the CM for an updated wage rate scale.
A Pre-Bid, Non-Mandatory walk will take place at the MCS High School Lobby (56720 Murray St, Mattawan, MI) at 12:00pm on 1/17/25 to view the project before submitting a bid.
A Pre-Bid, Non-Mandatory walk will take place at the MCS Middle School Lobby (24959 W McGillen St, Mattawan, MI) at 1:30pm on 1/17/25 to view the project before submitting a bid.
While not required, pre-bid walks can help bidders understand the project and provide more accurate bids and are highly recommended.

Bid Information is available now.
Bids are due: Wednesday, February, 5th at 1:00 PM EST at the Mattawan Consolidated Schools
Central Office (ATTN Pam): 56720 Murray St. Mattawan, MI 49071
There will be a sealed public bid opening to follow.

PROJECT LOCATION
Mattawan Consolidated Schools High School and Middle School

SCOPES OF WORK BIDDING
26.100 Electrical & Low Voltage

Lawrence Public Schools
Small Community, Big Opportunities

Empowering, inspiring and challenging students to champion a lifetime of education and excellence.

- Safe and Secure Learning Environment
- Flexible Learning Options
- Dedicated, Student Centered Staff
- Multi-Tiered System of Supports
- Social Emotional Supports
- Focus on Building Relationships
- Personalized Learning
- Peer Assisted Learning Supports
- Dual Enrollment
- Michigan Transfer Agreement
- Middle College
- Work Based Learning
- School to Work
- VB Tech Center

Please contact our admissions office at 269) 674-8233 for more information and a school of choice application. At this time, LPS has unlimited K-12 grade level openings.

Lawrence Public Schools is your School of Choice!

CLASSIFIEDS

• WANTED •

CLARK'S AUTO PARTS, INC. is buying cars, trucks & all metals for recycling. Lawrence, 674-4905 or 1-800-707-8650.

STANDING TIMBER.
Top Michigan lumber manufacturer seeking landowners with 25 or more mature hardwood trees to sell. Qualityhardwoodsinc.com • 517-566-8061.

MEDICARE INSURANCE RATES GOING UP
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540.521-570.527: Public Auction: **1/28/2025 at or after 9:30a.m. EST: 37404 W Red Arrow Highway Paw Paw:** Michael Hauck, 60; Brooke Collins, 90/109; Calia Nelson, 212; Nicole Summerton, 245; David Wigner, 329.

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Public Notice

Continues from page 8

in the office of the Register of Deeds, for The County of Van Buren and State of Michigan, on the 24th day of April, 2018 in Liber 1667 of Van Buren County Records, page 834, said Mortgage having been assigned to Servbank, SB on which mortgage there is claimed to be due, at the date of this notice, the sum of Eighty-Four Thousand Seven Hundred Forty-Four and 52/100 ($84,744.52). Notice of Foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the Circuit Court Van Buren County, starting promptly at 01:00 PM o'clock Local Time on the 20th day of February, 2025. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. The bid may include interest thereon at 5.62500 per annum and all legal costs, charges, and expenses, including the attorney fees allowed by law, and also any sum or sums which may be paid by the undersigned, necessary to protect its interest in the premises. Which said premises are described as follows: All that certain piece or parcel of land, including any and all structures, and homes, manufactured or otherwise, located thereon, situated in the Village of Decatur, County of Van Buren, State of Michigan, and described as follows, to wit: LOT(S) 15 AND THE EAST 1/2 OF LOT 14, BLOCK ZZ, VILLAGE OF DECATUR, ACCORDING TO THE RECORDED PLAT OF 1905, AS RECORDED IN LIBER 2 OF PLATS, PAGE 31. Commonly known as 310 E EDGAR BERGEN BLVD, DECATUR, MI 49045 During the six (6) months immediately following the sale, the property may be redeemed, except that in the event that the property is determined to be abandoned pursuant to MCLA 600.3241a, the property may be redeemed 30 days after the foreclosure sale or when the time to provide the notice required by the statute expires, whichever is later. Pursuant to MCLA 600.3278, the mortgagor(s) will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. If the sale is set aside for any reason, the Purchaser at the sale shall be entitled only to a return of the deposit paid. The Purchaser shall have no further recourse against the Mortgagee or the Mortgagee's attorney Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. Dated: 01/16/2025 Servbank, SB Mortgagee _____HLADIK, ONORATO & FEDERMAN, LLP Athena Aitas (P61824) Attorney for Servicer 3290 West Big Beaver Road, Suite 117 Troy, MI 48084 (248)362-2600 AFB FHA Enders - 24-03380
1550337

(01-16)(02-06)

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE
This firm is a debt collector attempting to collect a debt. Any information we obtain will be used for that purpose.
Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, Michigan, starting promptly at 1:00 o'clock in the afternoon on Thursday, the 20th day of February, 2025. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
The mortgage was made by ROYAL TIDE PARTNERS II, LLC, a Delaware limited liability company ("Mortgagor"), to GREENSTONE FARM CREDIT SERVICES, FLCA, a federally chartered corporation, having an office at 3515 West Road, East Lansing, Michigan 48823 (the "Mortgagee"), dated March 30, 2022, and recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds for Van Buren County, Michigan on April 7, 2022, in Liber 1736, Page 470 (the "Mortgage"). By reason of a default under the conditions of the Mortgage, the Mortgagee elects to declare and hereby declares the entire unpaid amount of the Mortgage due and payable forthwith. Mortgagee is the owner of the indebtedness secured by the Mortgage.
As of the date of this Notice there is claimed to be due for principal and interest on the Mortgage the sum of Six Hundred Eighty-Eight Thousand Seven Hundred Ninety-Six and 71/100 Dollars ($688,796.71). No suit or proceeding at law has been instituted to recover the debt secured by the Mortgage or any part thereof.
The premises covered by the Mortgage are situated in the Township of Covert, County of Van Buren, State of Michigan, and are described as follows:
Part of the South Half of Section 36, Town 2 South, Range 18 West, described as: Beginning at the Southeast corner of said Section 36; thence North, along the East line of said Section, 515.00 feet; thence West, at right angles to said East line, to the Easterly right-of-way line of 1-196 Highway; thence Southwesterly, along said Easterly right-of-way line, to the South line of the Southwest Quarter of said Section; thence Easterly, along the South line of said Southwest Quarter to the South Quarter post of Section 36; thence Easterly, along the South line of the Southeast Quarter of said Section 36, to the place of beginning.
Together with (a) all the estate, title, interest, and rights of Borrower in the premises and all buildings and improvements of every kind and description now or later placed on the premises; (b) all of the rents, profits, and leases of the premises and the tenements, hereditaments, easements, privileges, and appurtenance with respect to the premises; (c) all goods (including furniture, fixtures, equipment and appliances) and general intangibles now owned or later acquired by Borrower and now or later related to, affixed to, attached to, placed on, or used in any way in connection with the ownership, use, occupancy, or operation of the premises; (d) all of Borrower's rights, title and interest in, to and under all present and future land contracts, sales agreements or option agreements relating to the premises; (e) and all rights to make divisions of the premises that are exempt from the platting requirements of the Michigan Land Division Act, as it is amended.
Commonly known as: 47780 82nd Street and 47950 82nd Street, Coloma, Michigan 49038
P.P. #80-07-086-010-03 and 80-07-086-013-00
Notice is further given that the length of the redemption period will be one (1) year from the date of sale.If the premises are sold at a foreclosure sale, under MCLA §600.3278 the Mortgagor will be held responsible to the person who buys the premises at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the Mortgagee for damaging the premises during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the Mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
Dated: January 17, 2025
GREENSTONE FARM CREDIT SERVICES, FLCA
Mortgagee

Timothy Hillegonds
WARNER NORCROSS + JUDD LLP
150 Ottawa Avenue NW Suite 1500
Grand Rapids, MI 49503-2487
(616) 752-2000
31802495

(1-17)(2-7)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: KRISTIN POTTER; Atty: ANDREW BARNES - ANDREW BARNES; 1st Pub: 1/16/2025; Atty File #: (N/A); Insurer: (unknown)
NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE BY ADVERTISEMENT Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following Mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 p.m., on February 13, 2025. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. THIS FIRM IS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT, ANY INFORMATION WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. PLEASE CONTACT OUR OFFICE AT THE NUMBER BELOW IF YOU ARE IN ACTIVE MILITARY DUTY. Default has occurred in the conditions of a Mortgage (the "Mortgage") made by KRISTIN POTTER, a single woman, as Mortgagor(s), to United Federal Credit Union, as Mortgagee. The Mortgage is dated May 14, 2020 and was recorded June 26, 2020 at Liber 1702 Page 76 of Van Buren County Records. The amount claimed to be due on said Mortgage and unpaid at the date of this Notice is FIFTY-FIVE THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED EIGHTY-TWO AND 38/100 ($55,382.38) DOLLARS, including interest on the applicable indebtedness at a rate of 6.375% per annum. This sum will increase as additional interest, costs, expenses, and attorney fees accrue under the Mortgage and its related note and which are permitted under Michigan law after the date of this Notice. No legal or equitable proceedings have been instituted to recover the debt secured by the Mortgage, and the power of sale in the Mortgage has become operative by reason of the default. At the date and time as referenced previously in this Notice, the Mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the property herein described, or some part of them, at public auction, to the highest bidder, for the purpose of satisfying the amount due and unpaid on the Mortgage, along with interest due, the legal costs and charges of sale as allowed by statute and/or the Mortgage, and any taxes and insurance that the Mortgagee pays on or prior to the date of said sale. The property mentioned and described in the Mortgage, as located in the City of Hartford, County of Van Buren, and State of Michigan, are more particularly described as follows: Beginning at a point found by commencing at the South quarter post of Section 16, Town 3 South, Range 16 West, City of Hartford, Van Buren County, Michigan and running thence with bearings referenced to the West line of Allen Huntley and Stickney's Addition to the Village of Hartford as a meridian, East 599.32 feet, thence North along the Southerly extension of the Westerly line of said Subdivision 757.62 feet to the Westerly right-of-way of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, thence around a curve to the left with a radius of 2808.32 feet to the far end of a chord which bears North 30 degrees 30 minutes 29 seconds East 418.73 feet, thence continuing around a curve to the left with a radius 2808.32 feet to the far end of a chord which bears North 25 degrees 48 minutes 48 seconds East 53.33 feet to the Northerly line to Pleasant Street, thence continuing around a curve to the left with a radius of 2808.32 feet to the far end of a chord which bears North 23 degrees 51 minutes 40 seconds East 127.18 feet, thence continuing around a curve to the left with a radius of 2808.32 feet to the far end of a chord which bears North 21 degrees 43 minutes 32 seconds East 82.15 feet to the point of a beginning of this description, thence South 87 degrees 22 minutes 10 seconds West (historically described as North 87 degrees 22 minutes 10 seconds East) 144.73 feet to the Easterly line of Pleasant Street, thence North along said Easterly line 75.09 feet to the Southerly line of South Street, thence North 87 degrees 22 minutes 10 seconds East along said Southerly line 172.65 feet to the Westerly line of the C&O Railroad; thence around a curve to the right with a radius of 2808.32 feet to the far end of a chord which bears South 20 degrees 03 minutes 29 seconds West 81.30 feet to beginning; Address: 201 Pleasant St., Hartford, MI 49057; Tax Parcel No.: 80-52-816-010-20. together with all existing or subsequently erected or affixed buildings, improvements, and fixtures; all easements, rights of way, streets, roads, alleys, and public places, privileges, and appurtenances, public or private, now or later used in connection with the premises; and all rights to make divisions of the land that are exempt from the platting requirements of all applicable land division or platting acts, as amended from time to time. Attention Purchasers: the foreclosing Mortgagee reserves the right to cancel the sale prior to sale or to rescind this sale at any time. In that event, your damages, if any, will be limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at the sale, plus interest. If the mortgaged property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Attention Homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. The length of the redemption period will be six (6) months from date of sale, unless the redemption period is shortened pursuant to MCL 600.3241a or MCL 600.3238, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of sale or as otherwise provided by statute. DATED: January 16, 2025 ANDREW W. BARNES (P70571) BUTZEL LONG P.C. ATTORNEYS FOR UNITED FEDERAL CREDIT UNION 317 Center Street South Haven, MI 49090 269-287-2010

(01-16)(02-06)

Bronson Healthcare named as one of the nation's 14 elite employers: A Best and Brightest Companies to Work For

The National Association for Business Resources (NABR) just released its 2024 list of National Elite Winners: Best and Brightest Companies to Work For®, and Bronson Healthcare is one of 14 companies included on the nation-wide list! This Elite award in the Employee Achievement and Recognition category distinguishes Bronson as a top-performing organization in delivering exceptional human resource practices and an impressive commitment to their employees. It is a recognition of outstanding achievements in employee engagement, satisfaction and corporate culture.

Bronson has been included on the West Michigan and national lists of Best and Brightest Companies to Work For® since 2023.

Bronson's Chief People Officer, Cheryl Johnson, says, "We are honored to be nationally recognized as an organization that genuinely values its employees. This distinction stems from a comprehensive evaluation of our employment practices, total rewards program, as well as our initiatives to foster employee wellness, education, inclusion and community involvement. Together, with our outstanding employees and medical staff, these efforts make Bronson a truly exceptional place to work."

With over 9,000 employees and more than 1,500 medical staff members, Bronson is the largest employer and leading healthcare system in southwest Michigan. It offers a full range of services from primary care to critical care across more than 100 locations. In 2023, Bronson was named by Fortune and PINC AI as one of the nation's 15 Top Health Systems. Bronson has earned several national honors for being a top employer including being ranked by Forbes as one of America's Best-In-State Employers (2022-24), by Newsweek as one of America's Greatest Workplaces for Women (2023) and by the National Association for Business Resources as one of the nation's Best and Brightest Companies to Work For (2023-24).

Advertisement for Bids

BID PROPOSAL

Sealed bids, in triplicate, for the Paw Paw Public Schools, Multi-purpose addition and STEAM Renovations, will be received until 2:00 pm local time, Tuesday January 28th,2025 at Paw Paw High School Library, 30609 E Red Arrow Hwy, Paw Paw, MI 49079. Bids received after this time will neither be considered nor accepted.

All proposals received by the time and date stated above will be opened and read publicly at 2:00 pm local time, Tuesday January 28th, 2025, at Paw Paw High School Library, 30609 E Red Arrow Hwy, Paw Paw, MI 49079.

Bids may be mailed/dropped off to Owen Ames Kimball, 2700 Stadium Dr. Suite 2, Kalamazoo, MI 49008. Mailed/dropped off bids must be received by 11:00 am local time on the date stated above. FAXED, EMAILED OR UPLOADED TO BUILDING CONNECTED BIDS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

In accordance with Section 1267 of the Revised School Code each bid must be accompanied by a sworn and notarized Familial Disclosure Statement completed by the bidder disclosing any familial relationship between the Owner or any employee of the Bidder and any member of the District's Board of Education or the Superintendent of the District.

BID DOCUMENTS

The Bidding Documents may be examined at the following locations:

- Owen-Ames-Kimball Co. Website: http://www.owen-ames-kimball.com/subcontractors/
- Builders Exchange plan rooms in Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Lansing and Traverse City.

BIDDER QUALIFICATIONS

Bidders submitting a Bid for this Project shall have qualifications as follows:

a. Shall be a reputable, recognized organization, with at least five (5) years successful experience on work of this type and scope of this project.
b. Shall have a license where required by public authorities having jurisdiction.
c. Shall have ample financial resources for work of this magnitude.

BID SECURITY - PERFORMANCE BONDS

The board, intermediate school board, or board of directors shall require each bidder for a contract under this section to file with the board, intermediate school board, or board of directors security in an amount not less than 1/20 of the amount of the bid conditioned to secure the school district from loss or damage by reason of the withdrawal of the bid or by the failure of the bidder to enter a contract for performance, if the bid is accepted by the board, intermediate school board, or board of directors.

For questions, please contact Owen-Ames-Kimball Co. at 269-276-9700.

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PLANNING AHEAD FOR 2025

livewell full of panfish

Part of the fun in fishing and hunting is in the planning. Planning includes making reservations, inventorying tackle boxes, making rigs and tackle.

We are particular where we stay in Detroit. The Best Western and Holiday Inn in Woodhaven is set-up for the anglers. They offer cleaning tables and water for cleaning our fish and ample outdoor receptacles when charging our boat batteries. The month of April is prime time on the Detroit River and the hotels fill up quickly.

All of my fishing buddies do a quick inventory of their tackle boxes. What we are low on we order as a group. This also applies to the fishing line. Buying in volume saves money for all of us.

Another plus is that we can order well in advance. This served us well last week when we found out that our favorite walleye jig was discontinued. Very few anglers use the Northland Whistler jighead. It's' by far our favorite and the one ounce size was discontinued.

You Tube took care of this problem. We found two videos that showed how we can make our own. The Whistler Jig head is very similar to the Do-It-Mold "Diner Shiner" jighead. I own that mold. All you need to do is add a propeller blade and a bead.

Our detailed log books showed us that three baits produced 95% of our bluegill. The Hot Legs foam spider and the Black Gnat fly from Stopper Lures and the Perch Pounder rigs. My only issue with the Perch Pounder rig is that you can't mix various colors at the same time. Second, when one hook breaks the rig is shot. We watched a few videos on how to make a Sabiki Rig and made a few dozen this past Friday.

We trim the legs on the Hot Leg Spiders. The spiders and Gnats are fished on the surface early in the season and then on a dropper line over deep water during the summer.

Another crazy thing that we do is test our Carlisle Slip floats. How much weight will it take for the float to be completely submerged? Then we mark the float with a permanent marker. This way when we grab a slip float we know how much weight we can use.

Instead of a sinker we use the Sitka Smelt Sticks. You will be shocked at how many fish we catch on these things. These "chain style" little spoons are deadly on both the bluegill and the perch.

As we inventoried our tackle and looked at our log books we were surprised on the number of crappie that we caught using the Original Pinkie jig. There is something about a marabou jig that crappies can't resist. Fishing a Pinkie jig under a float works surprisingly well.

One small item that made a huge difference in our panfish catch rate was adding a small soft glow egg. We try to use a glow lure but when we can't we slip on a small soft glow egg. These glow beads make a difference.

We also use the Rapala Glow/UV charger. This very small and slender tool will recharge your glow baits in ten seconds. This makes a big difference.

Another item to carry would be a small hook sharpener. Rest assured most panfish anglers never consider sharpening their panfish baits. It only takes a few swipes on the honing stone to put the edge back onto the lure or hook.

This is also a great time to inventory your freezer. I enjoy making salami, snack sticks and jerky. I then pack up very small bags that are perfect in size for a half day on the water. The canned fish is often used as a fish dip appetizer when we take our over -night fishing trips.

January is also a prime time to research new lakes. You can check the DNR surveys, talk with bait shop owners and other anglers. January and February are also my prime times to scout deer. Beds and trails readily show up and adding a way- point can be saved for future use. Happy New Year and stop in at Bobs Gun and Tackle Shop.

Jack Payne

Payne is a member of OWAA (outdoor writers association of America). He is an avid outdoorsperson who enjoys fishing, hunting, hiking and cooking. This column will hopefully enhance your outdoor experiences. "While I may have some knowledge, I am very fortunate that I do know many true experts that share their knowledge with me," said Payne. "Together, hopefully we all can learn and experience more fun in the great outdoors." Payne resides in southwest Michigan. His column will appear weekly in the Courier Leader/ Flashes.

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Every year we have a yard sale and all proceeds go to Berrien County Cancer Services.

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